

# Kentucky Teacher™

FEBRUARY 2003

## New Era of Accessibility

## Eligible students can take state tests online this spring

By Fran Salyers  
Kentucky Department of Education

**T**his spring, for the first time in Kentucky's 13-year history of measuring student achievement and school accountability under the governance of the Kentucky Education Reform Act, students with disabilities will be able to take the state's tests online.

Online testing will be available only to those students with disabilities who meet specific criteria (see "Who's Eligible" on Page 3).

The innovation marks a new era of equity and accessibility for students, says Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit. "This is one more step in our commitment for equal educational opportunities for all students," Wilhoit said. "Students with disabilities will now be able to take the Kentucky Core Content Tests independently, using the same technologies they use throughout the year to learn."

The Department of Education will post the tests on a password-protected Web site. Students eligible to take the tests online can have test questions read aloud by software known as textreaders or screenreaders and choose other accommodations such as font size and color schemes, based on their individual education plans (IEP). The site will feature a link to online help with problems related to the online testing process plus a prompt to ask a teacher for help when necessary.

Already available are practice areas that let students and their teachers get familiar and

comfortable with this new tool's design and operation. The online test and practice areas are available for all Kentucky Core Content Tests administered in grades 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12. The online option is not available for the nationally normed CTBS tests taken by students in grades 3, 6 and 9.

The launch of online testing follows more than two years of planning and technical design work plus two "trial runs," one in May 2002 involving 61 students in 21 schools and one last fall involving almost 400 students in 46 schools. Overall, the feedback from

those trials was positive:

- Most participating teachers (67 percent) reported that students seemed to like taking the tests online. It carried "less stigma" than having test questions read aloud by a human reader.
- More than half of the participating teachers said online testing increased student understanding of test questions; only 10 percent said it made testing harder for students.
- Ninety-two percent of the teachers said that monitoring the students during testing was "easy" or

created few concerns about students seeking undue assistance (for example, by looking at another student's monitor or browsing the Internet for answers). Because of this proctored environment, the teachers also had no concerns about students printing answers for others to see.

- The teachers said that participating students tended to be more focused on the online tests because they had greater independence and control over their own test-taking process. They could, for example, independently re-read passages and return to questions to review their answers.

- Based on experiences in the Fall 2002 trial run, 62 percent of the teachers said that the same number of students or more students are likely to participate in online testing in Spring 2003.

### Challenges

Department officials continue to work on some elements of online assessment, including

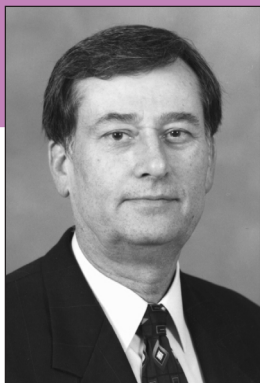
*Continued on Page 3*



Photo by Rick McComb

### Back to the '60s

Gallatin County High School students Jesse Brewer and Mindy Lay arrange items in an exhibit about the lifestyles and newsmakers of the 1960s. Many parents and community residents who grew up during that era donated memorabilia, talked with classes of students and participated in a veterans' appreciation program as part of a schoolwide collaborative unit of study centered on the Vietnam War.



# Commissioner's Comments

## Team up to profit most from the new, improved Teaching and Learning Conference

By Gene Wilhoit  
Commissioner of Education

If you've attended the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference in the past, you may think you know what to expect at this year's event. You may want to think again.

KTLC '03, Pathways to Proficiency, will provide many exciting and informative sessions and workshops, and the exhibit hall will again showcase a wealth of resources for instruction, assessment, professional development, learning and other topics important to educators and students.

But this year, KTLC goes beyond that to incorporate the content of many of the individual, program-related training opportunities once scheduled throughout the year. We're bringing them into the conference as a network of results-focused sessions and workshops.

As a result, you can expect to get a much more integrated, interactive, job-embedded professional development experience, in a format focused on our state's professional development standards, with sessions centered on the Standards and Indicators for School Improvement. The agenda even includes nine workshops that will launch virtual professional development courses teachers can take online through the Kentucky Virtual High School.

May I suggest an approach that will permit you to attend sessions that will meet your school's needs and bring you the information and ideas you want? Team up! To get the most from KTLC '03, attend with a group of five people. (I suggest five because the principal or assistant principal may attend free of charge when there are five or more paid registrations from one school.) Arrive with a "battle plan" that deploys each of your team members to selected sessions and workshops, based on the needs of your school or district. Then meet at set times during and after the conference to exchange what you've heard, seen and learned.

To make teamwork easier for you, we have posted the complete conference agenda online so you can plan which sessions are most important to you and which team member will cover each one. Once the developing Web site is complete, you will be able to identify and sort workshops and sessions by date, time or topic. A prominent feature this year will be conversation areas in the CyberCafe and exhibit hall 2D, where you can gather with your team or with other teams to trade notes and plan your fact-finding strategies for the rest of the conference.

Networking is a big part of this year's KTLC. Several sessions will bring people together for open discussions about challenges and solutions. With everyone focused these days on budgets, I suspect these idea exchanges could become important sources of information on how to make the most of limited resources.

The Department of Education staff has worked hard to make KTLC '03 relevant, interactive, informative, standards-based and enjoyable. If you haven't already registered and made lodging reservations, I hope you will do so quickly.

To comment to the commissioner on this or any topic, phone (502) 564-3141 or send e-mail to [gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us).

To register for the conference, use the form in the registration/agenda booklet distributed in the December-January issue of *Kentucky Teacher* or visit the Web site at [www.kentuckytlc.org](http://www.kentuckytlc.org). Additional copies of the booklet are available from Cheryl Sanders at (502) 564-3421 or [csanders@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:csanders@kde.state.ky.us).



Photo by Rick McComb

### A New Voice on the Board

Janice Blackburn Allen (right) prepares to participate in discussions as the newest member of the Kentucky Board of Education. The veteran educator and former principal of James D. Adams Middle School in Prestonsburg holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Morehead State University. She attended her first board meeting on Jan. 13, when the board convened in Frankfort to consider Kentucky's response to the federal "No Child Left Behind" Act. On the left is board member Gail Ritchie Henson of Louisville.

## Pathways to PROFICIENCY '03

**Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference**  
**March 6-8, 2003**  
**Kentucky International Convention Center**  
**Downtown Louisville**

[www.kentuckytlc.org](http://www.kentuckytlc.org)

### On the Cover...

Science teacher Melissa Harris (right) pauses between classes to help 7th-grader Holly Graham with an assignment at Bowling Green Junior High School. (Photo by Rick McComb)



## Eligible students can take state tests online

Continued from Page 1

logistical issues related to local computer setup; simplifying local creation of school, teacher and student assessment profiles; and statewide availability of technical assistance and support. Scott Trimble, associate commissioner for assessment and accountability, reports that while online testing is a tremendous step toward equal access for students, some challenges remain.

"One major challenge is to assure that instructional materials and other classroom assessments are provided in a similar format," Trimble said. "Also, some students reported problems understanding the computerized voice, and the software does occasionally mispronounce words."

Trimble added that the online assessment software now available couldn't read some mathematics symbols or permit students to perform illustrative functions such as drawing graphs. "The department will need to set minimal standards for software and hardware that does what we need it to do in online instruction and assessment," he said.

While the online testing system works well within a Windows environment, the Mac operating system does not yield the same compatibility. Schools using Mac technology need to contact Linnie Calland at the Kentucky Department of Education for information and assistance with CATS Online.

Some schools that participated in last fall's trial run of online testing reported losing their Internet connections while administering the practice tests. They also reported that some teachers and students need more experience with textreader/screenreader

software and the online assessment process.

The Department is still working with the test vendor on a method for all students' responses to be submitted electronically. Until that option is developed, schools will need to plan for students to enter responses to online questions into a hard copy of the test response booklet and to seek adult assistance with this component when necessary. Answers to open-response items must be printed out and inserted into the test booklet.

Trimble said that department staff and the assessment coordinators in the school districts will be working to help districts and schools prepare for this first opportunity in online assessment. He suggested that schools take four preparatory steps before this spring's testing window (April 21- May 16):

1. Identify students who may qualify for online testing and ensure that they meet the eligibility requirements.
2. Schedule time for administrators, teachers and eligible students to use the testing system's online practice area.
3. Be sure that online access is each eligible student's preferred accommodation, and supply other accommodations (such as a human scribe/reader) if appropriate based on IEP.
4. Plan for logistical issues such as computer availability and setup/operation, student supervision/monitoring and student support.

For more information about Kentucky's new online assessment option, contact one of these Department of Education staff members:

Scott Trimble, (502) 564-2256 or [strimble@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:strimble@kde.state.ky.us)

Preston Lewis, (502) 564-4970 or [plewis@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:plewis@kde.state.ky.us)

Linnie Calland, (502) 564-7168 or [lcalland@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:lcalland@kde.state.ky.us)

### Who's eligible?

The Kentucky Core Content Tests will be available this spring to any student who meets all three qualification criteria:

- have an individual education plan (IEP) or 504 Plan that includes the need for a "reader" as an instructional and assessment accommodation
- have routine use of textreader or screenreader technology to access printed materials in classroom instruction and assessment
- have experience in using the Kentucky Core Content Tests Online Practice Area

Accommodations for these students must be related to the student's disabilities and be consistent with sound instructional practice for a student for whom accommodations are provided.

## 'Three Kinds of Writing' now online

Eleven middle and high school teachers who participated in a writing institute last summer are now spreading the wealth of ideas that evolved during their sessions. Their teachers' guide to writing for a variety of purposes is now accessible to all teachers via the Internet.

The Web site, Three Kinds of Writing Go Online ([www.wku.edu/3kinds/](http://www.wku.edu/3kinds/)), offers writing prompts, strategies and materials for teaching writing across the curriculum, examples of student work and commentary in support of various types of writing. Site sponsors include Western Kentucky University Action Agenda, the WKU Writing Project and the WKU Department of English.

The resource presents information in three categories:

- Writing To Learn – ideas for journals, response logs and admit/exit slips (brief writing assignments given at the beginning or end of class, most often used to revisit a discussion topic)
- Writing To Demonstrate Learning – ways to incorporate open-response writing, academic essays and lab reports into assessment practices
- Authentic Writing – "Literacy Autobiography" and "Mystery Short Story" ideas plus student samples for use as teaching aids or models for writing

As the participating teachers explain on the Web site, "Our hope is that teachers will use this as an 'idea bank' and examine the material with an eye towards adapting it to their specific needs or using it as a springboard to their own ideas."

Last summer's Three Kinds of Writing Institute was the brainchild of David LeNoir of Western Kentucky University's Department of English.

"Teachers are always looking for resources for one type of writing or another," LeNoir reports, "and each time they look, they have to start from scratch. The idea behind this project is to bring into a single site some teacher-friendly materials for a wide variety of writing assignments."

Teachers who participated in the institute were chosen based on the grade levels and content areas they teach and their writing expertise. The Web site they developed offers practical applications and tools, including scoring guides, brainstorming ideas and revision guides.

Angela Townsend, an institute participant and teacher at Greenwood High School in Warren County, encourages other teachers to visit the site. "This is an exciting idea that nourishes and motivates my students to create quality writing," she said. "The teachers at my school find it an invaluable resource for ideas when they are developing engaging units of study."

For more information about Three Kinds of Writing Go Online or to share thoughts and ideas, contact David LeNoir at [david.lenoir@wku.edu](mailto:david.lenoir@wku.edu) or Glasgow High School teacher Mary Fye at (270) 651-8801 or [mfye@glasgow.k12.ky.us](mailto:mfye@glasgow.k12.ky.us).

# READ & DISCUSS

EDUCATORS REVIEW BOOKS AND JOURNALS ABOUT THE PROFESSION

*During an intensive three-week professional development program to prepare for direct assistance to Kentucky schools, state-level educators met in groups to study books about improving public education. The following reviews are compilations of thoughts and reflections offered by members of those groups.*

## The Dreamkeepers – Successful Teachers of African American Children

By Gloria Ladson-Billings  
Paperback, 170 pages; Jossey-Bass; ISBN 0787903388; 1994

As Kentucky educators explore ways to help all students achieve at high levels, culturally relevant teaching is one approach that appears to work. It may be just the strategy to help close achievement gaps and reduce the number of novice learners.

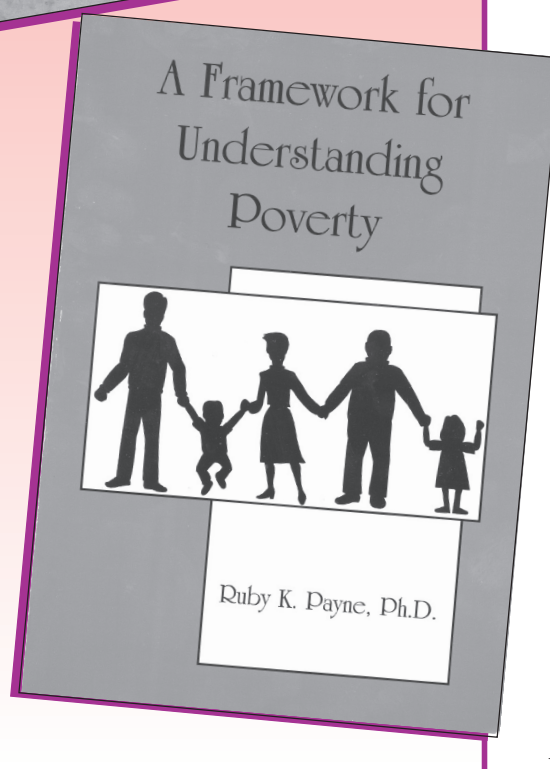
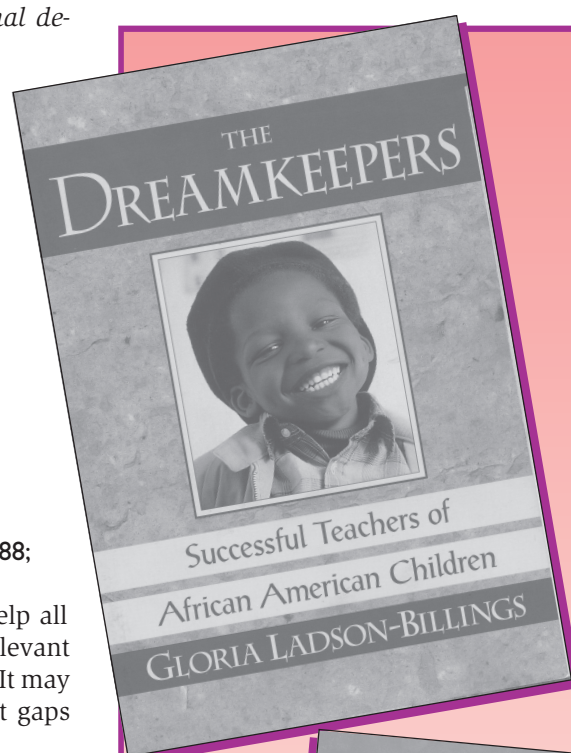
Achievement gaps between different groups of students don't just happen. The gap between African American students and their white peers is evident by the time children enter the first year of primary.

According to the 2000 National Assessment of Educational Progress, African American, Latino and poor students of all races are about two years behind other students by the end of grade 4. By grade 8, the gap between these groups of students is about three years.

In her book, "The Dreamkeepers—Successful Teachers of African American Children," Gloria Ladson-Billings introduces the reader to eight extraordinary teachers, African American and Caucasian, who practice culturally relevant teaching as they build a community of learners within their classrooms. Perhaps the most salient ingredient of a culturally relevant classroom is that of relationships.

Ladson-Billings writes of culturally relevant teachers: "Their relationships with students are fluid and equitable and extend beyond the classroom. They demonstrate a connectedness with all of their students and encourage that same connectedness between the students. They encourage a community of learners."

Ladson-Billings emphasizes the importance of making sure that every child sees his or her culture



reflected in the curriculum. "Culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using

cultural references to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes." This book reminds all of us – even the slightly jaded, perhaps somewhat cynical – why teachers are so important in the lives of children.

The "aha" moment comes when readers realize these same practices and strategies help create a learning community in which all students, regardless of gender, ethnicity, family income level or diverse learning need, can learn at high levels. Ladson-Billings paints a portrait of a culturally relevant teacher who keeps the dream of academic excellence alive, one child at a time.

## A Framework for Understanding Poverty

By Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D.  
Paperback, 205 pages; aha! Process Inc.; ISBN 1929229143; Revised edition 2001

Ruby Payne's "A Framework for Understanding Poverty" explores the hidden rules of economic classes and sends the all-important message that there are strategies for overcoming the obstacles poverty can create in instructional settings.

Using scenarios, Payne explores how people harness the emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, systematic and relational resources needed to function in their respective economic classes. Payne writes that being in poverty is rarely about a lack of intelligence or ability but about not knowing there is a choice and not having someone to teach the hidden rules of the middle and upper classes.

In quizzes that test the reader's knowledge of "survival skills," readers are asked if they know how to use a knife as scissors (a skill of the poor), how to use different tools in the garage (a middle-class skill) or fly their own plane (a skill of the wealthy).

Most importantly, Payne tells how to help children of poverty adjust to school discipline and build the cognitive strategies they need to store and process information and thus become successful learners.

The importance of Payne's message for Kentucky's schools lies in her expressed goal of helping children of poverty make sense of the "what" they learn in school and use educational content in their daily lives.



## Partners in Achievement

# Counselors are key leaders in the quest for proficiency

By Karen Cook  
School Counselor  
Pulaski Southwestern High School

**S**chool counselors may just be one of the greatest bargains in our school systems today.

Why? When there is a need for most anything – information, coordination of services, organizational and management skills, student support, instruction in study skills and test preparation, assessment planning and implementation, data interpretation, problem solving, networking with community resources, crisis intervention, peer mediation, anger management, and of course counseling and consultation skills – the counselor's office is the place to go.

What are the most efficient ways schools can tap the many skills of counselors? A look at some of the outstanding counselors and programs in Kentucky gives a strong direction.

One such counselor is Bowling Green Junior High School's Mary Higgins. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recently named her Middle/Junior High Counselor of the Year. Higgins has worked at the school for 23 years and has been a counselor since 1985. She is responsible for helping 440 students develop academic, personal, social and career skills.

When Higgins started counseling students in the '80s, some of the students at her school weren't even planning on graduating from high school. But as society's opportunities and expectations grew, Higgins' role in preparing students for the future changed. Higgins now works with all students – "not just students in crisis and not just students going to college," she said – helping them plan their four years of high school and what they want to do after graduation.

Higgins is a strong advocate for the ASCA's National Model for Comprehensive School Guidance and Counseling Programs. The model, recently released in draft form, connects school counseling with the national emphasis on student achievement and success.

Higgins believes that effective counseling is essential to programs within Kentucky's education system and the federal "No Child Left Behind" law. She calls on school councils and other education leaders to recognize the value of counseling, especially when looking for staff reduction options in these days of budget shortfalls.

Mary Ann Wilson agrees. Wilson, counselor at Oak Hill Elementary in Pulaski County and current president of the Kentucky School Counselor Association



Photo by Rick McComb

Mary Higgins, counselor at Bowling Green Junior High School, offers some pointers to 8th-grader Doi Le on using the Internet to investigate career options. Higgins, recently named National Middle/Junior High Counselor of the Year, says the role of school counselors has expanded to include service to all students, "not just students in crisis and not just students going to college."

tion (KSCA), emphasizes that while the focus on student success has remained the same through the years, counselors now need to have data showing a direct relationship between their services and student achievement. She acknowledges challenges in collecting data in a domain that deals with emotions and feelings.

Ballard County Elementary School counselor Pam Gabbard is, like Higgins, a strong advocate of the new National Model for Comprehensive School Guidance and Counseling Programs. Gabbard provides workshops on incorporating the model in Kentucky schools.

"School counselors in Kentucky are often overloaded with clerical responsibilities, administrative tasks, discipline issues and monitoring duties," Gabbard says. "Kentucky educators must recognize that school counselors are professionals who are integral to the total educational program."

Lexington Bates Creek High School counselor Dianne Crouch, president-elect of the Kentucky School

Counseling Association, believes that school counselors are vital players in student achievement, even beyond all of the clerical work they must provide to support students.

"Counselors are the glue for students, the part of school that is safe and caring and understanding," she says. "That doesn't mean that counselors should not be honest with students, but even honesty about their faults can be presented in a caring fashion. Counselors help students see reality in academics, in home life, in the world and in themselves. Does this affect student achievement? Ask the kids and the parents."

Karen Cook, a 13-year veteran of school counseling, is president of the Kentucky Counseling Association. She can be reached at (800) 350-4522 or on the Web at [www.kyca.org](http://www.kyca.org).

All counselors quoted in this article can receive e-mail through the KETS global list.

To read about the National Model for Comprehensive School Guidance and Counseling Programs, visit [www.schoolcounselor.org/](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/) online and click on "National Model."

For information about school counseling in Kentucky, including state standards, visit the Department of Education's Web site ([www.kentuckyschools.org](http://www.kentuckyschools.org)) and enter "Counseling and Crisis Services" in the search box, or contact Angela Wilkins at [awilkins@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:awilkins@kde.state.ky.us) or Nijel Clayton at [nclayton@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:nclayton@kde.state.ky.us). The phone number for their office is (502) 564-3678.

### **Congratulations, Kentucky School Counselor Association School Counselors of the Year 2002-03**

- Barb Snapp, Walker Hall Elementary, Kentucky School for the Deaf
- Melinda Kuhnhehn, Winburn Middle School, Fayette County
- Vikki Ashurst, Harlan County High School

**February 3-7, 2003  
National School Counseling Week  
and Kentucky Counseling Week**

## Kentucky gains 204 nationally certified teachers, 10th highest number in the nation for 2001-02

**M**ore than 200 Kentucky teachers earned their profession's top honor in 2002 by achieving certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Kentucky now has 356 teachers with that distinction. Their names are available online at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

Kentucky posted the 10th highest number of new nationally certified teachers in the U.S. Other leading states were North Carolina (1,475), Florida (1,243), South Carolina (1,070), California (651), Ohio (463), Georgia (380), Mississippi (321), Oklahoma (241) and Illinois (222).

Nationwide, 7,886 teachers representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia earned national board certification in 2002, bringing the total number to 23,930.

Founded 15 years ago, NBPTS is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and non-governmental organization dedicated to advancing the quality of teaching and learning. The organization's certification process requires teachers to complete a rigorous, performance-based assessment that takes nearly a year to complete. The teachers provide evidence that they know how to teach their subjects effectively, demonstrate their ability to manage and measure student learning, and document their content knowledge in six-hour exams in the subjects they teach.

The NBPTS certification system is voluntary and does not replace state licensing and certification requirements. It is a professional certification increasingly used by states as an option for advanced licensing status.

Kentucky offers several incentives and support programs for teachers considering national certification. For information online, visit these Web sites:

- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards ([www.nbpts.org/about/stateinfo.cfm?state=Kentucky](http://www.nbpts.org/about/stateinfo.cfm?state=Kentucky))
- Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board ([www.kyepsb.net/](http://www.kyepsb.net/))

The following board staff members are available to answer questions:

- Kevin Skeeters, Candidate Subsidy Program Administrator, Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board, 1024 Capitol Center Drive, Suite 225, Frankfort, KY 40601; (502) 564-9479; [kskeeter@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:kskeeter@kde.state.ky.us)
- Lynn Hines, Program Manager and Consultant for National Board Certification, Western Kentucky University, 354 Tate Page, #1 Big Red Way, Bowling Green, KY 42101; (270) 745-5583; [lhines@grrec.coop.k12.ky.us](mailto:lhines@grrec.coop.k12.ky.us). Hines manages national certification recruitment and mentoring efforts in the state and coordinates a project that provides financial and mentoring support for candidates in 51 Appalachian counties.

Information is also available from Mona Ball, Kentucky Education Association Candidate Support Network, 735 Executive Park, Louisville, KY 40207; (877) 893-3205 or (502) 893-3205; [ramonab@aol.com](mailto:ramonab@aol.com).

Many Kentucky school districts also support and assist national certification candidates in various ways. Check with individual district offices for information.

### State and national leaders comment . . .

"Kentucky teachers who've completed national board certification consistently reference it as the best professional development experience they've ever had, and we're seeing the results in improved student achievement in the classroom. National board certification also aids our retention efforts by allowing accomplished, experienced teachers an opportunity for recognition and additional compensation while staying in the classroom where we need them most."

**Paul Patton, Governor of Kentucky**

"National board certification is an important part of our efforts to improve student achievement and professionalize teaching. The growing number of teachers meeting this very high standard shows that teachers' commitment to professional growth is both deep and wide."

**Sandra Feldman, President, American Federation of Teachers**

"Teachers who attempt the demanding national board assessments have signaled their willingness to hold themselves to the highest professional standards. The NEA salutes the thousands of exemplary teachers who have achieved the profession's highest form of recognition, and encourages those still pursuing national board certification to continue this important journey."

**Reg Weaver, President, National Education Association**

*Source: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards*



Jerry Parks,  
Georgetown Middle  
School



# Scott County teacher offers tips to others considering the quest

By Jerry Parks  
Georgetown Middle School

*Note: Jerry Parks received certification from the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in November 2002. In this article, he describes his experience with the process and shares some advice.*

When the infamous “box” from NBPTS arrived in September 2001, I was prepared. I had heard the horror stories about the 400 hours. I had also heard about the 25 percent pass rate. Nevertheless, my journey toward certification was beginning, and so were all the challenges the next year would hold.

Becoming a nationally certified teacher involves the submission of four portfolios that include student writing samples, videotaped teaching and learning activities, and documented accomplishments as a professional educator. Candidates must also pass a three-hour written examination and achieve a cumulative score of at least 275 out of 400.

By October I had finally digested the detailed instruction book and realized the endeavor was as thorough as advertised – and more difficult than I had anticipated. I began by planning my students’ writing assignment (letters to President Bush after 9-11), selected my whole-class lesson to be taped (“law” in present and ancient cultures), and spent hours highlighting key words and concepts in my “National Standards” book.

The winter months were the most taxing. The students would determine my fate on the videotaped small-group requirement. Seven groups selected, organized and analyzed the 10 most important events or inventions of the past 300 years, with as little teacher intervention as possible. This became my highest-scoring entry, and I felt especially proud!

Most difficult was the Documented Accomplishments entry. Each time I compiled my list, the rejoinder from online discussion groups rang in my head – “How do you *know* this contributed to improvements in student learning?” – and forced me to rethink. I tossed many mentions of my proudest personal honors in favor of logs of interactions with parents and accounts of my students’ improving scores on state tests. I thought these might be more important to evaluators. I was right.

The most difficult part of the process (besides writing that \$2,300 check!) came as the March 2002 deadline neared. I realized I couldn’t finish! Even when I took that box, containing a year of my life’s hardest work, to the post office in Georgetown, I was still correcting. It was true: the portfolios are never finished, just *mailed*.

In the spring I took my written exam.

After three hours, I had regurgitated everything I knew about American history, economics and movement/migration patterns. I knew the exam wouldn’t make or break me and that it wouldn’t be my strongest contribution to the process. I was right on both counts.

In November, I was presenting a session at the National Council for Social Studies in Phoenix when

those heart-stopping words began to circulate: “Scores are posted.” Checking online for my own scores was as unnerving as anything I’ve ever done. The very best my students and I could produce was up for acceptance or rejection. Would I pass, or would I “bank” my scores and try again? I had only to see the word “congratulations” to be reduced to tears.

Looking back, the process was truly a learning experience. I’m not sure I could attempt it again, but I recommend the process to others. I will offer any support I can through conferences and NBPTS discussion groups.

Sometimes I still think of that box – the complexity of the requirements it contained, the time I had to invest to reach my goal, the weight of it as I mailed it back to NBPTS. It was quite a year out of my life, filling that box. While my scores validated my work and my teaching, I still remember things I could have done just a little better.

But at least now, I feel comfortable in saying “I’ve finally finished.”

Contact Jerry Parks at [jparks@scott.k12.ky.us](mailto:jparks@scott.k12.ky.us) or (502) 863-3805.

## Tips for National Certification Candidates

- Be sure to join and participate in Internet discussion groups of candidates in your content area. Here is where the *real* information and support come from. (Find these groups at <http://nbpthelp.mainpage.net>, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group> and <http://wizzlewolf.com/nbc.html>.)
- The NBPTS evaluation is based on the content expectations in the National Standards Book! Eat, sleep and breathe the national standards!
- Allot extra time to your videotaped portfolios, and punch out that tab in your best tape! Script anything that can’t be heard well.
- Start collecting and preparing for the Documented Accomplishments entry first. Remember: It’s only a valid accomplishment if you can provide evidence that it has benefited students, other teachers or the profession and goes *beyond* what’s expected of every teacher. Use verification forms.
- Ask for help. Let fresh eyes read your analytical writing, and get away from it every once and awhile.
- *Budget your time!* The quest can be all consuming if you don’t.
- Dissect and analyze the exemplar samples from your instruction book. Note *why* they are exemplars, and follow their simplicity. Keep your writing short, simple and to the point. Talk *to*, not *at*, the reader! Dissertations impress no one at NBPTS. Write as to a first-year teacher, and let *your* voice pervade.
- Continually include “for example...,” “this is important because...” and “I know this benefited my students because...”
- Don’t excessively study for the exam. You’ll either know the answers or you won’t, and the scoring is extremely statistical and unbiased.
- Commit to a schedule. Realize you’re going to marry this thing for several months, and if you can’t put in the time, don’t get engaged.

Source: Jerry Parks, Teacher, Georgetown Middle School, Scott County

# National Certification

# Survey indicates that educators want and need more training in student behavior management

By Lynn McCoy-Simandle, Ph.D.,  
Eastern Kentucky University  
and C. Michael Nelson, Ed.D.,  
University of Kentucky

In faculty meetings, professional development sessions and casual conversation, teachers frequently remark that classroom management is the hardest part of their job and the part for which they felt least prepared when entering the teaching profession. As recently as September 2001, a Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll of public school teachers found that lack of discipline/more control and lack of financial support were the most frequently cited problems facing public schools.

Kentucky school principals begin their career as classroom teachers. When they move into administration, the expectation is that they know classroom management and can apply those management skills to a schoolwide plan. However, if teachers are feeling unprepared in classroom management, how do Kentucky principals view their training and competence in the area of behavior management versus content instruction?

The Kentucky Association of School Administrators, in conjunction with the Kentucky Center for School Safety, conducted a survey of principals regarding their perceptions of preparedness for teaching and discipline. All Kentucky principals were asked to respond to the three-page survey by the end of January 2002.

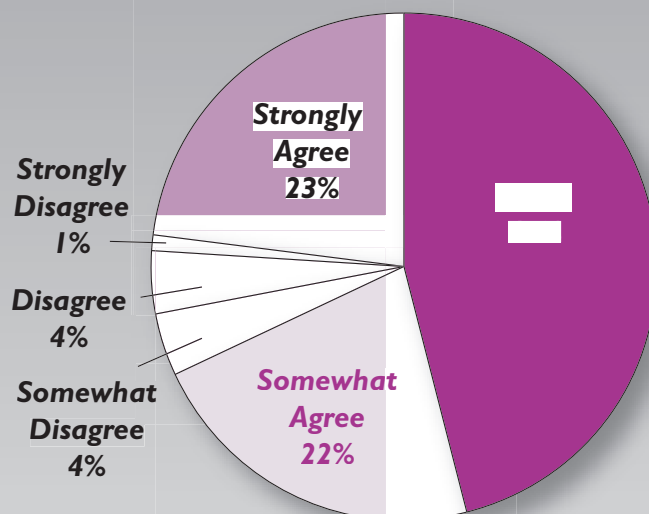
Participants could choose from six options on each of 11 questions relating to preparation as a teacher and principal. Additionally, 10 questions asked respondents to rate the responsibility of institutions of higher learning and school districts regarding the provision of services to pre-service and new teachers and principals.

The response rate for the survey was 31.9% (447 returned out of 1,400 mailed).

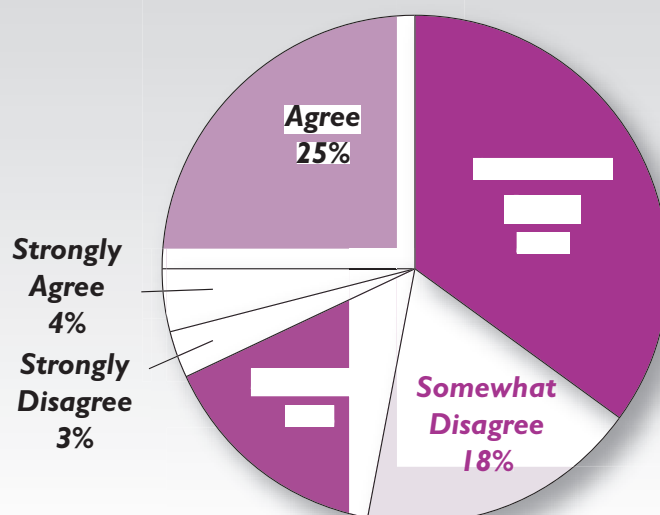
The principals reported that as beginning teachers they felt much more prepared to teach in their content area than to manage behavior. (See Charts.)

Respondents reported taking far fewer classes in classroom management than in their content areas. This lack of course work may explain why principals felt less prepared to manage behavior as they began teaching than they did to teach content. Principals rated the adequacy of professional development more favorably in content areas than in behavior management, with 51.7 percent choosing "strongly agree,"

## As a new teacher, I felt prepared to teach in my content area



## As a new teacher, I felt prepared to manage behavior



Source: Kentucky Principals' Perceptions of Preparedness in Behavior Management, 2002

"agree" or "somewhat agree" for content training as opposed to only 36.7 percent selecting the three "agree" choices for behavior management training.

On the other hand, 54.2 percent of respondents said they felt capable of handling discipline matters when they were new principals, while only 41.8 percent felt capable acting as an instructional leader and 42 percent felt able to coach teachers who were struggling with classroom behavior management. Conversely, more principals (47.4 percent) felt that districts provided adequate professional development for

their role as an instructional leader than for their role as classroom behavior management coach (25.8 percent).

Principals responded that institutions of higher learning shouldered the most responsibility for teaching subject content (63.8 percent) and behavior management (64.7 percent) to new teachers. Of the principals responding, 51.7 percent held school districts more accountable for providing professional development in subject content and 57.3 percent in behavior management.

Results of the survey indicate that principals see institutions of higher learning as preparing teachers more thoroughly to teach content to students than to manage student behavior. Likewise, school districts were seen as providing more adequate professional development in content areas than in behavior management. Given this information, institutions of higher learning and school districts may want to examine the pressing need for required pre-service training in basic foundations of behavior management and the school district's role in refining these skills.

### Addressing the Issue

The Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS) is a consortium of four partners working collaboratively to promote safe and healthy learning environments in Kentucky schools. The partners are Eastern Kentucky University, the University of Kentucky, Murray State University and the Kentucky School Boards Association.

KCSS provides behavior management programs throughout the state for teachers and administrators. The center also encourages instructional assistants and paraprofessionals to participate in those programs.

Since the results of this survey suggest that past efforts have not adequately addressed the preparation of educators to manage student behavior, KCSS urges all school districts to reflect internally to assess their needs in the area of behavior management training. To request assistance from KCSS, contact the staff toll free at (877) 805-4277.

To request a copy of the complete report from which this article was excerpted, send e-mail to [Lynn.McCoy-Simandle@eku.edu](mailto:Lynn.McCoy-Simandle@eku.edu), call (877) 805-4277 or visit the Kentucky Center for School Safety's Web site at [www.kysafeschools.org](http://www.kysafeschools.org) (search "Behavior Management").

For links to resources on working with children who display challenging behaviors, consult the Behavior Home Page: [www.state.ky.us/agencies/behave/bi/universal.html](http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/behave/bi/universal.html).



# Early intervention is the key!

Owensboro schools report success with new approaches to reading

By Joy Barr  
Kentucky Department of Education

**T**eachers in the Owensboro Independent school district are willing to try new or different approaches to reading instruction, and their students are reaping the rewards.

In 1999-2000, educators in the district began investigating research-based interventions for struggling readers. District reading intervention specialist/speech language pathologist Jayne Hall, curriculum specialist Janice Hawes and several others – including classroom teachers, speech/language pathologists and Title I staff – began the research. The main goal was to address a chronic challenge: how to assist students who were not functioning at age expectancy or grade level.

A regressive cycle had been perpetuated districtwide. Some students continued to struggle with reading in spite of the teachers' many efforts. Teachers usually resorted to referring a student for evaluation to determine whether or not the student would be eligible to receive support services. However, many of the students did not meet the stringent guidelines established for special support services.

Despite the best efforts of concerned professionals, some students were slipping through the cracks, and the reading achievement gap continued to widen.

The reading/language committee sought best-practice strategies for addressing the problem. Hall found that when a gap occurred in the process of learning to read, the gap could compound by three to six months per year. Students who lagged behind their peers by 3-6 months in the second year of primary could actually fall behind peers by 6-12 months by the start of the next school year. Hall also found that only 30 minutes of intervention a day could be successful if initiated early, when students were 5, 6 or 7 years old.



Linda Renfrow, an instructional assistant in the language lab at Owensboro's Foust Elementary, conducts a memory exercise with primary student C.J. Douglas. The activity is part of the district's three-year, research-based strategic plan to prevent reading problems before they can develop.

"The earlier the intervention is initiated, the more quickly the gap can be closed," Hall said. "If intervention does not take place in early grades, the gap continues to compound, adversely affecting a student's self-esteem."

Hall took particular interest in a research study conducted by the Yale Center for the Study of Learning and Attention. Extensive work had been completed

with new brain imaging techniques, which allowed observation of the brain during reading. The research report included these findings:

- Poor readers have less activity in certain parts of the brain compared to good readers.
- Reading is not automatic for all children.
- Intervention in phonemic awareness effectively improves reading and spelling performance. (Hall defines phonemic awareness as the ability to recognize and manipulate individual sound units – phonemes – in spoken language, to sequence sounds in words, to see relationships between sounds in words, and to rearrange sounds to create new words.)

After receiving training in phonemic awareness, the committee developed a three-year, districtwide strategic plan for bridging the gap in reading. Phonemic awareness is one of the plan's key interventions.

The district established reading/language labs to address differentiated learning. Students went to interactive reading labs for assessment and intervention. A learning profile determined where gaps existed in each student's level of reading performance. Teachers then developed instruction plans that bring students to the reading/language lab for 40- to 60-minute sessions of intense instruction based on their individual needs.

Teachers keep data sheets on each student and monitor student progress every week, making immediate adjustments in instruction as necessary.

The district is committed to building a foundation for children to learn to read so they can read to learn. For more information about Owensboro's reading intervention programs, contact Jayne Hall at (270) 686-1000 or send e-mail to [jhall@owensboro.k12.ky.us](mailto:jhall@owensboro.k12.ky.us) (or through the KETS global list).

## Reports From the Field

- Owensboro's Foust Elementary has established a reading lab with three full-time teachers. "We have worked extremely hard and made several sacrifices to make the lab a reality," Principal Jeff Gray told a visitor to the school. "Last year, we worked exclusively with students in the first two years of primary. We have been pleased with the results. We immediately began to plan strategically for involving a greater number of students."

- At Seven Hills Elementary, facilitator Leigh Ann Crume reports that students are excited about working on reading in the school's lab, "especially because they are working on individual skills to increase their ability to read. The students are gaining more confidence. Their attitude toward reading seems to be more positive."

- At Estes Elementary, reading/language lab teacher and coordinator Donna Mills says teachers are pleased that students are learning to read in the language lab. Elementary facilitator Marcia Harrison is integrating phonemic awareness instruction from the reading lab with classroom instruction, contributing to a comprehensive reading program.

## Now online: open-captioned educational videos

A new service puts educational videos on the Internet with visible captions to make them accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The service, sponsored by the National Association of the Deaf and the U.S. Department of Education, will provide approximately 450 captioned videos, including productions such as "Blood, Heart and Circulation," "Giant Sea Turtles," "Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad" and "Lassie's Great Adventure." Access to the videos is free of charge.

The online access expands the services of the Captioned Media Program, which has made captioned videos available through the mail for the past four decades. The program's collection includes more than 4,000 videos that are open-captioned, meaning that the text of each video is visible in writing at the bottom of the screen.

Users will need RealPlayer on their computers to view the streamed videos on the Internet. A link to download a free version of RealPlayer is posted on the Captioned Media Program's Web site at [www.cfv.org](http://www.cfv.org).

For more information, visit the Captioned Media Program's Web site or contact one of these persons:

- Genny Lyman, Kentucky Library Manager, Captioned Media Program, Kentucky School for the Deaf, S. Second St., Danville, KY 40422; (859) 239-7017; [glyman@ksd.k12.ky.us](mailto:glyman@ksd.k12.ky.us)
- Bill Stark, Project Director, Captioned Media Program, National Association of the Deaf, 1447 E. Main St., Spartanburg, SC 29307; (800) 237-6213; [BStark@cfv.org](mailto:BStark@cfv.org)

## Look for Arts Council ideas and grants at KTLC

The Kentucky Arts Council will present arts-related teaching strategies and grant opportunities during the 25th annual Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference, March 6-8 at the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville.

Musicians, dancers, storytellers and visual artists will showcase their work and demonstrate how teachers can incorporate the arts into their curriculum. The



Photo by Rick McComb

### Final Review

Eighth-grader Lien Tran did some last-minute studying before a final exam in health class at Bowling Green Junior High School.

council's booth will feature information about two familiar grant opportunities, Artist in Residence and Teacher Initiated Program, plus two new grant options:

- Youth Center Initiated Program – five- or 10-day artist residencies for alternative schools.
- ArtsStart! – five- or 10-day residencies tailored for early childhood populations.

For information on Kentucky Arts Council education programs, visit the council's Web site ([www.kyarts.org](http://www.kyarts.org)) and click on "Arts Education," or contact John S. Benjamin at (888) 833-2787 or [john.benjamin@mail.state.ky.us](mailto:john.benjamin@mail.state.ky.us) (or through the KETS global list).

## Arts education showcases set for March

The Kentucky Center for the Arts has planned one-day showcases to familiarize Kentucky educators with performing and visual artists, creative writers, arts organizations and cultural institutions available as resources for schools.

Showcases are planned for the following dates and locations:

- March 5 - Bomhard Theatre, Kentucky Center for the Arts, Louisville
- March 11 - RiverPark Center, Owensboro
- March 12 - Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green
- March 18 - Singletary Center for the Arts, Lexington
- March 19 - Appalshop, Whitesburg
- March 20 - Thomas More College, Crestview Hills
- March 21 - Ashland Community College, Ashland

The registration fee is \$7 per person. Showcase planners have mailed registration brochures to all school principals. For additional brochures, contact Jeffrey Jamner at (502) 562-0703 or [jjamner@kca.org](mailto:jjamner@kca.org). For information and a registration form, view [www.kentuckycenter.org/education/artseducation.asp](http://www.kentuckycenter.org/education/artseducation.asp) on the Web.

## Project seeks 'wild' ideas from teachers

Sponsors of a new Web resource, All Wild About Kentucky's Environment (AWAKE), invite teachers to submit their favorite ideas for teaching and learning about Kentucky's natural environment.

AWAKE already features curriculum-aligned, standards-based information about Kentucky's organisms and their habitats. The sponsors want to add teacher-recommended activities, lesson plans, units of study, Web sites, Web quests, books or other resources that help students learn about nature themes.

Sponsors include the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, UK's Tracy Farmer Center for the Environment, UK's Cooperative Extension Service and the Kentucky Department of Education.

To recommend a resource, send the name of the resource, your name and contact information, plus information about how the resource connects to Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment, to Stephanie Jenkins at [swjenk@uky.edu](mailto:swjenk@uky.edu) or Venita Bright at [venita.bright@mail.state.ky.us](mailto:venita.bright@mail.state.ky.us).



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For program information, visit [www.kentuckyschools.org](http://www.kentuckyschools.org)



# Bulletin Board

By Joy Barr  
Kentucky Department of Education

## ***African American heritage conference planned for Feb. 27***

The Kentucky African American Heritage Education Forum will hold its annual conference on Feb. 27 at the Gheens Professional Development Academy in Louisville. The focus of the agenda will be curriculum changes designed to close the racial achievement gap.

For more information, contact Nicole Harris at (502) 564-7005, ext. 125, or [Nicole.Harris@mail.state.ky.us](mailto:Nicole.Harris@mail.state.ky.us). Information is also available online at [www.kyheritage.org](http://www.kyheritage.org).

## **KYSPRA spring retreat scheduled for April 17-18**

This year's Kentucky School Public Relations Association spring retreat will be April 17 and 18 at the Lake Cumberland State Resort Park in Jamestown. To register or request information, visit [www.kyspra.com](http://www.kyspra.com) online or contact Missy Morgan at (606) 528-1303 or [mmorgan@corbin.k12.ky.us](mailto:mmorgan@corbin.k12.ky.us).

## ***Teacher of the Year application available***

Beginning Feb. 1, Kentucky educators may apply for the 2004 Teacher of the Year program, sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Education and Ashland Inc. The program recognizes outstanding teachers by awarding professional growth opportunities and financial rewards.

To download an application, visit the department's Web page at [www.kentuckyschools.org](http://www.kentuckyschools.org). For more information, call Donna Melton in the Office of Educator Recruitment and Retention at (502) 564-1479 or send e-mail to [dmelton@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:dmelton@kde.state.ky.us).

## **Family/community leaders conference coming in March**

The annual conference of the Kentucky Association of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America will be March 26-28 at Galt House Hotels in Louisville. Workshops and sessions will give teachers and students ideas for projects that provide hands-on learning experiences.

For more information, contact Debra Tankersley at (502) 564-3775 or [dtankers@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:dtankers@kde.state.ky.us).

## **Apply before Feb. 14 for Teacher Academy grants**

Teachers wishing to participate in the next round of Kentucky Department of Education Teacher Academies have until 4:30 p.m. EST on Feb. 14 to apply. The intensive, long-term, content-focused professional development academies focus on core content knowledge and the ability to teach content more effectively. Academies also are designed to foster learning communities and develop leadership capacity of participating teachers.

Academies are open to all teachers and are coordinated and presented by approved providers in collaboration with the department's Office of Academic and Professional Development.

The application is accessible at [www.kentuckyschools.org](http://www.kentuckyschools.org) or from Diana L. Dattilo at (502) 564-7056 or [ddattilo@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:ddattilo@kde.state.ky.us).

## ***Seminar to feature ideas for teaching with crafts***

The Kentucky Craft Marketing Program will present Crafts Across the Curriculum, a professional development seminar for teachers, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Feb. 28 during Kentucky Crafted: The Market at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center in Louisville.

Participating teachers can interact with some of Kentucky's finest craftsmen and learn strategies for integrating crafts activities and core content, winning grants to support visiting artists and arts/crafts projects, and transforming field trips into multidisciplinary learning experiences.

The registration fee is \$50, and space is limited. For details, contact Judy Sizemore of the Kentucky Arts Council at (606) 364-5831 or [circuit@prtcnet.org](mailto:circuit@prtcnet.org).

## **Teachers recruited to create "Girls in Science" clubs**

The University of Kentucky invites teachers to participate in summer workshops on creating local Girls in Science clubs that encourage young women to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. All expenses will be paid, and teachers will receive a \$300 stipend to attend the summer workshop and \$500 to help create science clubs in their schools.

To download an application, visit [www.mc.uky.edu/behavioralscience/girlsinscience.asp](http://www.mc.uky.edu/behavioralscience/girlsinscience.asp). For more information, contact Caroline E. Reid at the University of Kentucky at (859) 266-7535 or [creid@uky.edu](mailto:creid@uky.edu).

## ***Language acquisition and early literacy conference scheduled for March 3 and 4***

This year's "Children: Our Common Wealth" conference for teachers is scheduled for March 3 and 4 at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center in Covington. Presented by Children, Inc., the conference will feature sessions on early language intervention.

The registration deadline is Feb. 21. For details, visit [www.childreninc.org](http://www.childreninc.org) or call (859) 431-2075.

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

# Kentucky Teacher™

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